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Dear Dr. Stratmoen

Ref: Your letter, January 17, 2002

Subject: **Audit report for Finland, August 15 – 30, 2001**

The National Food Agency (NFA) has the following comments as regards audit report, 2001:

HACCP

In addition to HACCP-training days, also several on-site HACCP-training occasions were arranged to official veterinarians in slaughterhouses and to provincial veterinary officers in 2002. The comments concerning HACCP have been taken into account and the HACCP systems of establishments have been improved.

Lighting

According to the report, lighting at post mortem inspection station was found to be inadequate during the audit 2000. In the audit report 2000, however, deficiencies as regards lighting were not mentioned. This piece of information is therefore erroneous.

After the audit, lighting was improved in post mortem inspection using e.g. head lights, when necessary.

Species verification

We have repeatedly requested information as regards species testing of meat cuts but no clear answer was received. In addition, the information received from two previous USDA inspectors as regards species testing of fresh meat has been contradictory and confusing. During the teleconference March 13, 2002, it was confirmed that species test needs not to be performed if only meat cuts are exported to the USA. NFA sent a letter on March 23, 2002 ensuring that only pork cuts were exported to the USA in 2001.

Internal reviews

Previous auditors have not requested monthly audits of cold stores. Therefore, this was a new requirement to us.

Testing for generic *E.coli*

After the audit, statistical control procedures were established in establishments for evaluating the results of *E.coli* testing.

A letter informing of the sampling procedure and testing method was sent to FSIS September 28, 2001. Furthermore, a letter was sent on April 8, 2002 with a request that, in addition to government inspectors, also establishment employees could take the samples. The letter included also a request as regards the approval of the NMKL method for testing generic *E.coli*.

Testing for *Salmonella* species

The sample collector: A letter informing of the sampling procedure and testing method was sent to FSIS September 28, 2001. Furthermore, a letter was sent on April 8, 2002 to request that, in addition to establishment employees, also the government inspectors could take the samples.

Location and size of samples: According to the report Finland collects samples from two large sites. This is true as regards beef but as regards pigs, samples are taken also from jowl area. The sampling sites of beef were never an issue with FSIS. This has been reported to FSIS in a letter, dated September 28, 2001.

Analytical methods: In addition to ISO method, the European Commission approved the use of NMKL method for the testing of salmonella as regards the Finnish salmonella control program. The use of NMKL Method was reported to FSIS in a letter, dated September 28, 2001. A formal request for the approval of the NMKL method was sent to FSIS April 8, 2002.

Yours sincerely

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